

Bill Code: 4710-05

Department of State

[Public Notice]

Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) Request for Grant

Proposals: Youth Leadership Program with Central America

Announcement Type: New Grant

Funding Opportunity Number: ECA/PE/C/PY-09-40

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number: 00.000

Application Deadline: May 28, 2009

Executive Summary: The Office of Citizen Exchanges, Youth Programs Division, of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) announces an open competition for the Youth Leadership Program with Central America. Public and private non-profit organizations meeting the provisions described in Internal Revenue Code section 26 USC 501(c)(3) may submit proposals to recruit and select youth and adult participants in the seven countries of Central America and to provide the participants with three-week, U.S.-based exchanges focused on entrepreneurship and business skills, community engagement, and leadership. The program will conclude with follow-on activities in the participants' home communities in which they apply the knowledge and skills acquired during the exchange experience. ECA plans to award a single grant for the management of the program and encourages organizations to work together as partners for effective administration in all seven countries and in the United States.

I. Funding Opportunity Description

Authority:

Overall grant making authority for this program is contained in the Mutual Educational and Cultural Exchange Act of 1961, as amended, Public Law 87-256, also known as the Fulbright-Hays Act. The purpose of the Act is "to enable the Government of the United States to increase mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the people of other countries...; to strengthen the ties which unite us with other nations by demonstrating the educational and cultural interests, developments, and achievements of the people of the United States and other nations...and thus to assist in the development of friendly, sympathetic, and peaceful relations between the United States and the other countries of the world." The funding authority for the program above is provided through legislation.

Overview:

This Youth Leadership Program will bring secondary school-aged youth (ages 16-18) and adult educators from seven countries in Central America to the United States for three-week exchanges focused on entrepreneurship and business skills, community engagement, and leadership. The youth participants will be recruited from underserved or disadvantaged populations in these countries.

The participating countries are Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Panama.

The goals of the programs are to 1) promote mutual understanding between the United States and the people of Central America; 2) provide young adults with transferable skills appropriate to their needs; 3) develop a sense of civic responsibility to community and business development among youth; and 4) foster relationships among youth from different ethnic, religious, and national groups.

Applicant organizations should identify their own specific objectives and measurable outcomes based on these program goals and the project specifications provided in this solicitation.

ECA plans to award a single grant for the management of the program in all seven countries. The Bureau encourages organizations with expertise in a few of the participating countries to partner with other organizations with experience in the remaining countries in order to submit a single comprehensive proposal. Consortia must designate a lead institution for the grant award.

Through this program, five exchange projects in the United States will be offered for a total of approximately 110-120 youth and educators.

One project for Belize will be conducted in English, and will be designed for approximately 14 participants.

Four other projects will be conducted in Spanish, with interpreters accompanying the students. As proposed by applicant organizations, the Spanish-language projects will be single-country or regional projects, i.e., a group of students may be drawn from multiple participating countries in order to promote regional cooperation. Each of these exchange projects should be designed for 20 to 30 participants.

Examples of possible Spanish-language projects include:

- One delegation of 24 participants from Guatemala travels to the United States in April.
- Two delegations of 27 participants each, with 9 participants each from El Salvador, Honduras, and Nicaragua, travel to the United States in April and September.
- One delegation of 24 participants from Panama and Costa Rica, with 12 participants from each country, travels to the United States in May.

The preceding are only examples of possible projects, and should not be construed as Bureau preferences. Organizations are encouraged to be creative and flexible in their arrangements and to be responsive to Embassy preferences.

Planning will start in 2009, and after a careful recruitment and selection process, the exchanges will take place at various points throughout 2010, including during the U.S. school year.

The organization that receives the grant will recruit and select the exchange participants, provide a U.S.-based exchange experience, and lead the alumni in implementing projects in their home communities, enabling them to apply their newfound skills. A portion of the funding will be used to support in-country activities with all alumni and their peers in order to promote integration among youth in each country.

The exchange activities will focus on school-to-work transition, allowing the participants to develop practical business and job skills, such as communication, technology, marketing, and financial management skills. They will also explore the effective and sustainable use of resources, learn about civic engagement, life skills, and ethics, and identify the appropriate conditions for entrepreneurial projects. Activities will include workshops, school visits, community service/volunteer work, and site visits with community organizations and local businesses. Participants will live with American host families for a portion of the exchange period and have opportunities to interact with their American peers, including students of Spanish.

The applicant should present a program plan that allows the participants to thoroughly explore the themes in a creative, memorable, and practical way. Activities should be designed to provide practical knowledge and skills that the participants can apply to school, work, and civic activities at home in a positive and productive way.

U.S. Embassy Involvement:

Before submitting a proposal, applicants should consult with the Public Affairs Officers at U.S. Embassies in the participating countries as they develop proposals responding to this RFGP, particularly to review recruitment and the audience for the exchange and the timing of the exchange. Please e-mail ECA Program Officer Carolyn Lantz (LantzCS@state.gov) for contact information. Also, it is important that the proposal narrative clearly state the applicant's commitment to consult closely with the Public Affairs Section of the U.S. Embassy in the relevant countries to develop plans for project implementation and to select project participants.

Organizational Capacity:

Applicant organizations must demonstrate their capacity for doing projects of this nature, focusing on three areas of competency: (1) provision of programs that address the goals and themes outlined in this document; (2) age-appropriate programming for youth; and (3) previous experience working on programs with Latin America. Applicants must have the organizational capacity in the participating countries necessary to implement the in-country activities, or they

must partner with an organization or institution with the requisite capacity to recruit and select participants for the program and to provide follow-on activities. The importance of a viable, experienced in-country partner cannot be over-emphasized.

Organizations must convincingly demonstrate their capacity to manage a complex, multi-phase program with several separate exchange projects.

Guidelines:

The grant will begin on or about September 1, 2009. The grant period will be approximately 18 months in duration, as appropriate for the applicant's program design. Applicants should propose the period of the exchange(s) in their proposals, but the exact timing of the project may be altered through the mutual agreement of the Department of State and the grant recipient.

The grant recipient will be responsible for the following:

- Recruitment and selection of youth and adult educators from diverse geographic regions in the partner countries. The Public Affairs Section of the U.S. Embassy in the partner country will have a key role in developing a recruitment strategy and deciding how finalists are chosen.
- Provision of orientations for exchange participants and for those participating from the host communities.
- Designing and planning of activities that provide a substantive project on the specified themes. Some activities should be school and/or community-based, as feasible, and the projects will involve as much sustained interaction with American peers as possible.
- Homestay arrangements with properly screened and briefed American families for the majority of the exchange period.
- Provision of effective interpretation and translation for the Spanish-language projects.
- Logistical arrangements, including visa applications, international and domestic travel, accommodations, and disbursement of stipends.
- Follow-on activities in the partner country that reinforce the ideas, values and skills imparted during the U.S. program through community projects.

Recruitment and Selection: The grant recipient will manage the recruitment and merit-based selection of participants in cooperation with the Public Affairs Sections of the U.S. Embassies in the seven participating countries. The grant recipient must consult with the Public Affairs Section at the U.S. Embassy to review a recruitment and participant selection plan and to determine the degree of Embassy involvement in the process.

Organizers must strive for regional, socio-economic, and ethnic diversity, as well as gender balance. The Department of State and/or its overseas representatives will have final approval of all selected delegations.

Participants: The youth participants will be teenagers, 16 to 18 years old, recruited from underserved or disadvantaged populations of youth in these countries, including public school students, high school dropouts, and those at risk for involvement with drugs and/or gang activities. The exchange participants will also include adults who are teachers, school administrators, and/or community leaders who work with youth; they will have the dual role of both exchange participant and chaperone. The ratio of teenagers to adults will be approximately 6:1. Participants from Hispanophone countries will not need to speak English; the grantee organization will provide interpretation for the program and will place them with suitable host families.

U.S. Program: High school students and educators will spend approximately 21 days in the United States—in Washington, DC, and in one or two other communities—on an intensive program that is designed to develop the participants' knowledge and skill base in entrepreneurship and business skills, community engagement, and leadership.

The U.S. program should focus primarily on interactive activities, practical experiences, and other hands-on opportunities related to the program themes. All programming should include American teenagers wherever possible. The program will also provide opportunities for the adult educators to work with their American peers. Cultural, social, and recreational activities will balance the schedule. Participants will live with American families in homestays for at least half of the exchange period.

Follow-on Activities and In-Country Programming: In-country activities that help to support alumni in their post-exchange activities are required, and should enable the alumni to share their experiences and apply their skills. Applicant organizations should present creative and effective ways to address the project themes, for both program participants and their peers, as a means to amplify the program impact. U.S. project staff or trainers should travel to the partner countries several months after the exchange to conduct trainings that reinforce the themes of the exchange.

All participants and alumni should identify themselves with the Youth Leadership Program with Central America. Materials produced for grant activities need to acknowledge the U.S. Department of State as the sponsor and reflect the State Department's goals for the program.

The Bureau reserves the right to reduce, revise, or increase proposal budgets and participant numbers in accordance with the needs of the program and the availability of funds.

Proposals must demonstrate how the stated objectives will be met. The proposal narrative should provide detailed information on the major program activities, and

applicants should explain and justify their programmatic choices. Programs must comply with J-1 visa regulations for the International Visitor category.

Please be sure to refer to the complete Solicitation Package – this RFGP, the Project Objectives, Goals, and Implementation (POGI), and the Proposal Submission Instructions (PSI) – for further information.

II. Award Information:

Type of Award: Grant Agreement

Fiscal Year Funds: FY-2008 Economic Support Funds transferred to ECA in FY-2009 for obligation

Approximate Total Funding: \$994,000

Approximate Number of Awards: One

Floor of Award Range: \$994,000

Ceiling of Award Range: \$994,000

Anticipated Award Date: September 1, 2009

Anticipated Project Completion Date: Approximately 18 months after start date, to be specified by the applicant based on project plan

III. Eligibility Information:

III.1. Eligible applicants: Applications may be submitted by public and private non-profit organizations meeting the provisions described in Internal Revenue Code section 26 USC 501(c)(3).

III.2. Cost Sharing or Matching Funds: There is no minimum or maximum percentage required for this competition. However, the Bureau encourages applicants to provide maximum levels of cost sharing and funding in support of its programs.

When cost sharing is offered, it is understood and agreed that the applicant must provide the amount of cost sharing as stipulated in its proposal and later included in an approved grant agreement. Cost sharing may be in the form of allowable direct or indirect costs. For accountability, you must maintain written records to support all costs that are claimed as your contribution, as well as costs to be paid by the Federal government. Such records are subject to audit. The basis for determining the value of cash and in-kind contributions must be in accordance with OMB Circular A-110, (Revised), Subpart C.23 - Cost Sharing and Matching. In the event you do not provide the minimum amount of cost sharing as stipulated in the approved budget, ECA's contribution will be reduced in like proportion.

III.3. Other Eligibility Requirements:

III.3.a. Bureau grant guidelines require that applicant organizations with less than four years experience in conducting international exchanges be limited to \$60,000 in Bureau funding. ECA anticipates making an award in an amount exceeding \$60,000 to support program and administrative costs required to implement this exchange program. Therefore, organizations with less than four years experience in conducting international exchanges at the time of application are not eligible to apply under this competition.

III.3.b. Proposed sub-award recipients are also limited to grant funding of \$60,000 or less if they do not have four years of experience in conducting international exchanges.

III.3.c. The Bureau encourages applicants to provide maximum levels of cost sharing and funding in support of its programs.

IV. Application and Submission Information:

Note: Please read the complete announcement before sending inquiries or submitting proposals. Once the RFGP deadline has passed, Bureau staff may not discuss this competition with applicants until the proposal review process has been completed.

IV.1 Contact Information to Request an Application Package:

Please contact the Youth Programs Division, Office of Citizen Exchanges, ECA/PE/C/PY, Room 568, U.S. Department of State, SA-44, 301 4th Street, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20547. Telephone (202) 453-8171, Fax (202) 453-8169; E-mail: PiersonCompeauHM@state.gov to request a Solicitation Package. Please refer to the Funding Opportunity Number ECA/PE/C/PY-09-40 when making your request.

Alternatively, an electronic application package may be obtained from grants.gov. Please see section IV.3f for further information.

The Solicitation Package contains the Proposal Submission Instruction (PSI) document, which consists of required application forms, and standard guidelines for proposal preparation. It also contains the Project Objectives, Goals and Implementation (POGI) document, which provides specific information, award criteria, and budget instructions tailored to this competition.

Please specify Program Officer Carolyn Lantz and refer to the Funding Opportunity Number ECA/PE/C/PY-09-40 on all other inquiries and correspondence.

IV.2. To Download a Solicitation Package Via Internet:

The entire Solicitation Package may be downloaded from the Bureau's website at <http://exchanges.state.gov/grants/open2.html>, or from the Grants.gov website at <http://www.grants.gov>.

Please read all information before downloading.

IV.3. Content and Form of Submission: Applicants must follow all instructions in the Solicitation Package. The application should be submitted per the instructions under IV.3f. "Application Deadline and Methods of Submission" section below.

IV.3a. You are required to have a Dun and Bradstreet Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number to apply for a grant or cooperative agreement from the U.S. Government. This number is a nine-digit identification number, which uniquely identifies business entities. Obtaining a DUNS number is easy and there is no charge. To obtain a DUNS number, access <http://www.dunandbradstreet.com> or call 1-866-705-5711. Please ensure that your DUNS number is included in the appropriate box of the SF – 424 which is part of the formal application package.

IV.3b. All proposals must contain an executive summary, proposal narrative and budget.

Please Refer to the Solicitation Package. It contains the mandatory Proposal Submission Instructions (PSI) document and the Project Objectives, Goals and Implementation (POGI) document for additional formatting and technical requirements.

IV.3c. You must have nonprofit status with the IRS at the time of application. **Please note:** Effective January 7, 2009, all applicants for ECA federal assistance awards must include in their application the names of directors and/or senior executives (current officers, trustees, and key employees, regardless of amount of compensation). In fulfilling this requirement, applicants must submit information in one of the following ways:

- 1) Those who file Internal Revenue Service Form 990, "Return of Organization Exempt From Income Tax," must include a copy of relevant portions of this form.
- 2) Those who do not file IRS Form 990 must submit information above in the format of their choice.

In addition to final program reporting requirements, the award recipient will also be required to submit a one-page document, derived from program reports, listing and describing grant activities. For the award recipient, the names of directors and/or senior executives (current officers, trustees, and key employees), as well as the one-page description of grant activities, will be

transmitted by the State Department to OMB, along with other information required by the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA), and will be made available to the public by the Office of Management and Budget on its USASpending.gov website as part of ECA's FFATA reporting requirements.

If your organization is a private nonprofit which has not received a grant or cooperative agreement from ECA in the past three years, or if your organization received nonprofit status from the IRS within the past four years, you must submit the necessary documentation to verify nonprofit status as directed in the PSI document. Failure to do so will cause your proposal to be declared technically ineligible.

IV.3d. Please take into consideration the following information when preparing your proposal narrative:

IV.3d.1 Adherence To All Regulations Governing The J Visa

The Office of Citizen Exchanges of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs is the official program sponsor of the exchange program covered by this RFGP, and an employee of the Bureau will be the "Responsible Officer" for the program under the terms of 22 CFR 62, which covers the administration of the Exchange Visitor Program (J visa program). Under the terms of 22 CFR 62, organizations receiving awards (either a grant or cooperative agreement) under this RFGP will be third parties "cooperating with or assisting the sponsor in the conduct of the sponsor's program." The actions of recipient organizations shall be "imputed to the sponsor in evaluating the sponsor's compliance with" 22 CFR 62. Therefore, the Bureau expects that any organization receiving an award under this competition will render all assistance necessary to enable the Bureau to fully comply with 22 CFR 62 et seq.

The Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs places critically important emphases on the secure and proper administration of Exchange Visitor (J visa) Programs and adherence by recipient organizations and program participants to all regulations governing the J visa program status. Therefore, proposals should explicitly state in writing that the applicant is prepared to assist the Bureau in meeting all requirements governing the administration of Exchange Visitor Programs as set forth in 22 CFR 62. If your organization has experience as a designated Exchange Visitor Program Sponsor, the applicant should discuss their record of compliance with 22 CFR 62 et. seq., including the oversight of their Responsible Officers and Alternate Responsible Officers, screening and selection of program participants, provision of pre-arrival information and orientation to participants, monitoring of participants, proper maintenance and security of forms, record-keeping, reporting and other requirements.

The Office of Citizen Exchanges of ECA will be responsible for issuing DS-2019 forms to participants in this program.

A copy of the complete regulations governing the administration of Exchange Visitor (J) programs is available at <http://exchanges.state.gov> or from:

United States Department of State
Office of Exchange Coordination and Designation
ECA/EC/ECD - SA-44, Room 734
301 4th Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20547
Telephone: (202) 203-5029
FAX: (202) 453-8640

IV.3d.2 Diversity, Freedom and Democracy Guidelines

Pursuant to the Bureau's authorizing legislation, programs must maintain a non-political character and should be balanced and representative of the diversity of American political, social, and cultural life. "Diversity" should be interpreted in the broadest sense and encompass differences including, but not limited to ethnicity, race, gender, religion, geographic location, socio-economic status, and disabilities. Applicants are strongly encouraged to adhere to the advancement of this principle both in program administration and in program content. Please refer to the review criteria under the 'Support for Diversity' section for specific suggestions on incorporating diversity into your proposal. Public Law 104-319 provides that "in carrying out programs of educational and cultural exchange in countries whose people do not fully enjoy freedom and democracy," the Bureau "shall take appropriate steps to provide opportunities for participation in such programs to human rights and democracy leaders of such countries." Public Law 106 - 113 requires that the governments of the countries described above do not have inappropriate influence in the selection process. Proposals should reflect advancement of these goals in their program contents, to the full extent deemed feasible.

IV.3d.3. Program Monitoring and Evaluation

Proposals must include a plan to monitor and evaluate the project's success, both as the activities unfold and at the end of the program. The Bureau recommends that your proposal include a draft survey questionnaire or other technique plus a description of a methodology to use to link outcomes to original project objectives. The Bureau expects that the recipient organization will track participants or partners and be able to respond to key evaluation questions, including satisfaction with the program, learning as a result of the program, changes in behavior as a result of the program, and effects of the program on institutions (institutions in which participants work or partner institutions). The evaluation plan should include indicators that measure gains in mutual

understanding as well as substantive knowledge.

Successful monitoring and evaluation depend heavily on setting clear goals and outcomes at the outset of a program. Your evaluation plan should include a description of your project's objectives, your anticipated project outcomes, and how and when you intend to measure these outcomes (performance indicators). The more that outcomes are "smart" (specific, measurable, attainable, results-oriented, and placed in a reasonable time frame), the easier it will be to conduct the evaluation. You should also show how your project objectives link to the goals of the program described in this RFGP.

Your monitoring and evaluation plan should clearly distinguish between program outputs and outcomes. Outputs are products and services delivered, often stated as an amount. Output information is important to show the scope or size of project activities, but it cannot substitute for information about progress towards outcomes or the results achieved. Examples of outputs include the number of people trained or the number of seminars conducted. Outcomes, in contrast, represent specific results a project is intended to achieve and is usually measured as an extent of change. Findings on outputs and outcomes should both be reported, but the focus should be on outcomes.

We encourage you to assess the following four levels of outcomes, as they relate to the program goals set out in the RFGP (listed here in increasing order of importance):

1. **Participant satisfaction** with the program and exchange experience.
2. **Participant learning**, such as increased knowledge, aptitude, skills, and changed understanding and attitude. Learning includes both substantive (subject-specific) learning and mutual understanding.
3. **Participant behavior**, concrete actions to apply knowledge in work or community; greater participation and responsibility in civic organizations; interpretation and explanation of experiences and new knowledge gained; continued contacts between participants, community members, and others.
4. **Institutional changes**, such as increased collaboration and partnerships, policy reforms, new programming, and organizational improvements.

Please note: Consideration should be given to the appropriate timing of data collection for each level of outcome. For example, satisfaction is usually captured as a short-term outcome, whereas behavior and institutional changes are normally considered longer-term outcomes.

Overall, the quality of your monitoring and evaluation plan will be judged on how well it 1) specifies intended outcomes; 2) gives clear descriptions of how each outcome will be measured; 3) identifies when particular outcomes will be measured; and 4) provides a clear description of the data collection strategies for each outcome (i.e., surveys, interviews, or focus groups). (Please note that evaluation plans that deal only with the first level of outcomes [satisfaction] will be deemed less competitive under the present evaluation criteria.)

The Recipient organization will be required to provide reports analyzing evaluation findings to the Bureau in regular program reports. All data collected, including survey responses and contact information, must be maintained for a minimum of three years and provided to the Bureau upon request.

IV.3e. Please take the following information into consideration when preparing your budget:

Applicants must submit a comprehensive budget for the entire program. There must be a summary budget as well as breakdowns reflecting both administrative and program budgets. Applicants may provide separate sub-budgets for each program component, phase, location, or activity to provide clarification.

Please refer to the POGI and PSI for complete budget guidelines and formatting instructions.

IV.3.f. Application Deadline and Methods of Submission:

Application Deadline Date: Thursday, May 28, 2009

Reference Number: ECA/PE/C/PY-09-40

Methods of Submission:

Applications may be submitted in one of two ways:

- 1.) In hard-copy, via a nationally recognized overnight delivery service (i.e., Federal Express, UPS, Airborne Express, or U.S. Postal Service Express Overnight Mail, etc.), or
- 2.) electronically through <http://www.grants.gov>.

PLEASE NOTE: ECA strongly encourages organizations interested in applying for this competition to submit printed, hard copy applications as outlined in section IV.3f.1., below rather than submitting electronically through Grants.gov. This recommendation is being made as a result of the anticipated high volume of grant proposals that will be submitted via the Grants.gov webportal as part of the Recovery Act stimulus package. As stated in these RFGPs, ECA bears no responsibility for data errors resulting from transmission or conversion processes for proposals submitted via Grants.gov

Along with the Project Title, all applicants must enter the above Reference Number in Box 11 on the SF-424 contained in the mandatory Proposal Submission Instructions (PSI) of the solicitation document.

IV.3f.1 Submitting Printed Applications

Applications must be shipped no later than the above deadline. Delivery services used by applicants must have in-place, centralized shipping identification and tracking systems that may be accessed via the Internet and delivery people who are identifiable by commonly recognized uniforms and delivery vehicles. Proposals shipped on or before the above deadline but received at ECA more than seven days after the deadline will be ineligible for further consideration under this competition. Proposals shipped after the established deadlines are ineligible for consideration under this competition. ECA will not notify you upon receipt of application. It is each applicant's responsibility to ensure that each package is marked with a legible tracking number and to monitor/confirm delivery to ECA via the Internet. Delivery of proposal packages may not be made via local courier service or in person for this competition. Faxed documents will not be accepted at any time. Only proposals submitted as stated above will be considered.

Important note: When preparing your submission please make sure to include one extra copy of the completed SF-424 form and place it in an envelope addressed to "ECA/EX/PM".

The original, one fully-tabbed copy, and five (5) copies with Tabs A-E and appendices (no Tab F) should be sent to:

U.S. Department of State
SA-44
Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs
Ref.: ECA/PE/C/PY-09-40
Program Management, ECA/EX/PM, Room 534
301 4th Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20547

With the submission of the proposal package, please also e-mail the Executive Summary, Proposal Narrative, and Budget sections of the proposal, as well as any attachments essential to understanding the program, in Microsoft Word and/or Excel to the program officer at LantzCS@state.gov. The Bureau will provide these files electronically to the Public Affairs Section at the U.S. Embassies for their review.

IV.3f.2 – Submitting Electronic Applications

Applicants have the option of submitting proposals electronically through Grants.gov (<http://www.grants.gov>). Complete solicitation packages are available at Grants.gov in the "Find" portion of the system.

PLEASE NOTE: ECA strongly encourages organizations interested in applying for this competition to submit printed, hard copy applications as outlined in section IV.3f.1. above, rather than submitting electronically through [Grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov). This recommendation is being made as a result of the anticipated high volume of grant proposals that will be submitted via the [Grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) webportal as part of the Recovery Act stimulus package. As stated in these RFGPs, ECA bears no responsibility for data errors resulting from transmission or conversion processes for proposals submitted via [Grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov).

Please follow the instructions available in the 'Get Started' portion of the site (<http://www.grants.gov/GetStarted>).

Several of the steps in the Grants.gov registration process could take several weeks. Therefore, applicants should check with appropriate staff within their organizations immediately after reviewing this RFGP to confirm or determine their registration status with Grants.gov.

Once registered, the amount of time it can take to upload an application will vary depending on a variety of factors including the size of the application and the speed of your internet connection. In addition, validation of an electronic submission via Grants.gov can take up to two business days.

Therefore, we strongly recommend that you not wait until the application deadline to begin the submission process through Grants.gov.

The Grants.gov website includes extensive information on all phases/aspects of the Grants.gov process, including an extensive section on frequently asked questions, located under the "For Applicants" section of the website. ECA strongly recommends that all potential applicants review thoroughly the Grants.gov website, well in advance of submitting a proposal through the Grants.gov system. ECA bears no responsibility for data errors resulting from transmission or conversion processes.

Direct all questions regarding Grants.gov registration and submission to:

Grants.gov Customer Support
Contact Center Phone: 800 -518-4726
Business Hours: Monday – Friday, 7AM – 9PM Eastern Time
Email: support@grants.gov

Applicants have until midnight (12:00 a.m.), Washington, DC time of the closing date to ensure that their entire application has been uploaded to the Grants.gov

site. There are no exceptions to the above deadline. Applications uploaded to the site after midnight of the application deadline date will be automatically rejected by the grants.gov system, and will be technically ineligible.

Please refer to the Grants.gov website, for definitions of various "application statuses" and the difference between a submission receipt and a submission validation. Applicants will receive a validation e-mail from grants.gov upon the successful submission of an application. Again, validation of an electronic submission via Grants.gov can take up to two business days. Therefore, we strongly recommend that you not wait until the application deadline to begin the submission process through Grants.gov. ECA will not notify you upon receipt of electronic applications.

It is the responsibility of all applicants submitting proposals via the Grants.gov web portal to ensure that proposals have been received by Grants.gov in their entirety, and ECA bears no responsibility for data errors resulting from transmission or conversion processes.

IV.3g. Intergovernmental Review of Applications: Executive Order 12372 does not apply to this program.

V. Application Review Information

V.1. Review Process

The Bureau will review all proposals for technical eligibility. Proposals will be deemed ineligible if they do not fully adhere to the guidelines stated herein and in the Solicitation Package. All eligible proposals will be reviewed by the program office, as well as the Public Diplomacy section overseas, where appropriate. Eligible proposals will be subject to compliance with Federal and Bureau regulations and guidelines and forwarded to Bureau grant panels for advisory review. Proposals may also be reviewed by the Office of the Legal Adviser or by other Department elements. Final funding decisions are at the discretion of the Department of State's Assistant Secretary for Educational and Cultural Affairs. Final technical authority for assistance awards (grants) resides with the Bureau's Grants Officer.

Review Criteria

Technically eligible applications will be competitively reviewed according to the criteria stated below.

1. Quality of the program idea: Objectives should be reasonable, feasible, and flexible. The proposal should clearly demonstrate how the institution will meet the program's objectives and plan. The proposed program should be well developed, respond to the design outlined in the solicitation, and demonstrate

originality. It should be clearly and accurately written, substantive, and with sufficient detail. Proposals should also include a plan to support participants' community activities upon their return home.

2. Program planning: A detailed agenda and work plan should clearly demonstrate how project objectives would be achieved. The agenda and plan should adhere to the program overview and guidelines described above. The substance of workshops, seminars, presentations, school-based activities, and/or site visits should be described in detail.

3. Support of diversity: The proposal should demonstrate the recipient's commitment to promoting the awareness and understanding of diversity in participant recruitment and selection and in program content. Applicants should demonstrate readiness to accommodate participants with physical disabilities.

4. Institutional capacity and track record: Proposed personnel and institutional resources in both the United States and the partner country(ies) should be adequate and appropriate to achieve the program goals. The proposal should demonstrate an institutional record, including responsible fiscal management and full compliance with all reporting requirements for any past Bureau grants as determined by the Bureau's Office of Contracts. The Bureau will consider the past performance.

5. Program evaluation: The proposal should include a plan to evaluate the program's success in meeting its goals, both as the activities unfold and after they have been completed. The proposal should include a draft survey questionnaire or other technique, plus a description of a methodology to link outcomes to original project objectives. The grant recipient will be expected to submit intermediate reports after each project component is concluded.

6. Cost-effectiveness and cost sharing: The applicant should demonstrate efficient use of Bureau funds. The overhead and administrative components of the proposal, including salaries and honoraria, should be kept as low as possible. All other items should be necessary and appropriate. The proposal should maximize cost-sharing through other private sector support as well as institutional direct funding contributions, which demonstrates institutional and community commitment.

VI. Award Administration Information

VI.1a. Award Notices:

Final awards cannot be made until funds have been appropriated by Congress, allocated and committed through internal Bureau procedures. Successful applicants will receive a Federal Assistance Award (FAA) from the Bureau's Grants Office. The FAA and the original proposal with subsequent modifications

(if applicable) shall be the only binding authorizing document between the recipient and the U.S. Government. The FAA will be signed by an authorized Grants Officer, and mailed to the recipient's responsible officer identified in the application.

Unsuccessful applicants will receive notification of the results of the application review from the ECA program office coordinating this competition.

VI.2 Administrative and National Policy Requirements:

Terms and Conditions for the Administration of ECA agreements include the following:

Office of Management and Budget Circular A-122, "Cost Principles for Nonprofit Organizations."

Office of Management and Budget Circular A-21, "Cost Principles for Educational Institutions."

OMB Circular A-87, "Cost Principles for State, Local and Indian Governments".

OMB Circular No. A-110 (Revised), Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Agreements with Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals, and other Nonprofit Organizations.

OMB Circular No. A-102, Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants-in-Aid to State and Local Governments.

OMB Circular No. A-133, Audits of States, Local Government, and Non-profit Organizations

Please reference the following websites for additional information:

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants>.

<http://fa.statebuy.state.gov>

VI.3. Reporting Requirements: You must provide ECA with a hard copy original plus one copy of the following reports:

1. Interim reports, as required in the Bureau grant agreement.
2. A final program and financial report no more than 90 days after the expiration of the award;
3. A concise, one-page final program report summarizing program outcomes no more than 90 days after the expiration of the award. This one-page report will be transmitted to OMB, and be made available to the public via OMB's USAspending.gov website - as part of ECA's Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA) reporting requirements.

4. A SF-PPR, "Performance Progress Report" Cover Sheet with all program reports.

Award recipients will be required to provide reports analyzing their evaluation findings to the Bureau in their regular program reports. (Please refer to IV. Application and Submission Instructions (IV.3.d.3) above for Program Monitoring and Evaluation information.

All data collected, including survey responses and contact information, must be maintained for a minimum of three years and provided to the Bureau upon request.

All reports must be sent to the ECA Grants Officer and ECA Program Officer listed in the final assistance award document.

VII. Agency Contacts

For questions about this announcement, contact: Carolyn Lantz, Program Officer, Youth Programs Division, ECA/PE/C/PY, Room 568, U.S. Department of State, SA-44, 301 4th Street, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20547. Telephone (202) 203-7505. Fax (202) 203-7529. Email: LantzCS@state.gov.

All correspondence with the Bureau concerning this RFGP should reference the above title and the reference number ECA/PE/C/PY-09-40.

Please read the complete announcement before sending inquiries or submitting proposals. Once the RFGP deadline has passed, Bureau staff may not discuss this competition with applicants until the proposal review process has been completed.

VIII. Other Information:

Notice:

The terms and conditions published in this RFGP are binding and may not be modified by any Bureau representative. Explanatory information provided by the Bureau that contradicts published language will not be binding. Issuance of the RFGP does not constitute an award commitment on the part of the Government. The Bureau reserves the right to reduce, revise, or increase proposal budgets in accordance with the needs of the program and the availability of funds. Awards made will be subject to periodic reporting and evaluation requirements per section VI.3 above.